

the cauterizing bite
of heated steel
to sterilize
my heart
whole
again

yes
I say

you win

give
me
the glass

yes
take
what's left

that you'd like
to keep

YES

--Ottone M. Riccio

OLD BOOK SHOP

Squeezed (boldly)
between used cars
(BIG BIG DEALS)
and a barber shop
(English as she is spoke)
is a gray frog of a place
where on (knotty) pine boards
books books books books
sulk (some in sets)
and wait for sticky fingers
And a new sign pleads

SMOKERS

PLEASE USE ASH TRAYS
which has just been installed
by the goateed management
who pads about like a seal
in worn carpet slippers
and busily re-stacks
National Geographics.

--David Pearson Etter